

Message Text

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60

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /101 W

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R 022155Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3371

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OTTAWA 1321

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: JULY ELECTIONS?

REF: OTTAWA 1272

1. PROSPECTS FOR EARLY DEMISE OF TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT, AND SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS, WERE CONSIDERABLY HEIGHTENED MAY 1, WHEN NDP LEADER LEWIS JOINED OFFICIAL PROGRESSIVE-CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION IN REFUSING TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S "ANTI-GOUGING" LEGISLATION. THE BILL, TABLED APRIL 29, WAS OBVIOUSLY IN RESPONSE TO LEWIS' DEMAND THAT A PRICE CONTROL BOARD BE ESTABLISHED AND EMPOWERED TO ROLL BACK EXCESSIVE PRICE INCREASES. LEWIS CALLED THE BILL A "HOAX" AND "A SOP TO THE NDP," INADEQUATE TO PROTECT PUBLIC AGAINST PROFITEERING FIRMS.

2. GOVERNMENT CAN INDEFINITELY POSTPONE VOTE ON THIS LEGISLATION, OR CONCEIVABLY SUGGEST THAT IT'S DEFEAT WOULD NOT BE AN ISSUE OF CONFIDENCE. NDP REJECTION OF LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, INCREASES THE ALREADY GOOD LIKELIHOOD THAT NDP WILL SUPPORT A CONSERVATIVE AMENDMENT TO THE BUDGET, DUE MAY 6, OR PROPOSE A SUBAMENDMENT WHICH TORIES CAN SUPPORT. IF BUDGET DEBATE PROCEEDS AS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED, NDP SUBAMENDMENT WILL BE VOTED

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MAY 8, AND CONSERVATIVE AMENDMENT MAY 10. SUCCESS OF

EITHER HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN INTERPRETED AS INDICATING LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT, AND WOULD LEAD TO GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION. FEDERAL ELECTIONS COULD THEN BE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 8. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TRUDEAU, DESPITE HIS REPEATED STATEMENTS THAT GOVERNMENT WILL NOT SEEK NEW ELECTIONS UNLESS DEFEATED, WILL REQUEST DIS-SOLUTION OF COMMONS IF DEFEAT ON BUDGET APPEARS UNAVOIDABLE.

3. CONSERVATIVE SOURCES ARE JUBILANT ABOUT NDP DECISION, AND HAVE TOLD EMBASSY JULY ELECTIONS NOW INEVITABLE. THERE MAY BE OTHER OPTIONS LEFT TO LIBERAL GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN SHARPLY REDUCED.
PORTER

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